

OPTIMIZATION OF PARAMETERS OF LASER NON-LINEAR INCLINED CUTTING ON STAINLESS STEEL METAL

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DEDICATION

I would like to present my work to those, who did not stop supporting since I was born, my dear mother, my kind father, my dear brothers especially, “Hussein ” and “Hamed ”, and generally, to all my brothers, sisters. They never hesitate to provide me all the support to push me forward as much as they can. This work is a simple and humble reply to their goodness that I have experienced over during that time. I did not forget my uncles, aunts, all my friends from Iraq and Malaysia, those whom I love and all those, who have been a great help in the completion of this thesis whether directly or indirectly.

Abbas Allawi Abbas



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قال تعالى في محكم كتابه الكريم

وَقُلْ اَعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللّٰهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ

صدق الله العظيم

الاية ١٠٥ سورة التوبة

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to develop a laser cutting process model that can predict the relationship between the process input parameters and resultant surface roughness; kerf width characteristics. The research conduct is based on the Design of Experiment (DOE) analysis. Response Surface Methodology (RSM) is used in this research, it is one of the most practical and most effective techniques to develop a process model. Even though RSM has been used for the optimisation of the laser process, published RSM modelling work on the application of laser cutting process on cutting material is lacking. This research investigates laser cutting stainless steel to be best the circumstances laser cutting using RSM process. The input parameters evaluated are gas pressure, power supply and cutting speed, the output responses being kerf width, surface roughness. The laser cutting process is one of the widely used techniques to cut thickness material for various applications such as fiber, steel wood fabrication. In the area of laser cutting material, it can be improved drastically with the application of hard cutting. The application of cut on stainless steel for various machining techniques, such as bevel linear and bevel non-linear cutting, requires different cut characteristics, these being highly dependent on the process parameters under which they were formed. To efficiently optimize and customize the kerf width and surface roughness characteristics, a machine laser cutting process model using RSM methodology was proposed.

ABSTRAK

Matlamat penyelidikan ini adalah untuk membangunkan satu model proses pemotongan laser yang boleh meramalkan hubungan antara proses penginputan parameter dan kekasaran permukaan yang terhasil; ciri-ciri lebar alur gergaji. Penyelidikan yang dijalankan adalah berdasarkan Rekabentuk Eksperimen (JAS) analisis. Respons Permukaan Metodologi (RSM) digunakan dalam penyelidikan ini dan ia adalah salah satu teknik yang paling praktikal serta paling berkesan untuk membangunkan satu model proses. Walaupun RSM telah digunakan untuk pengoptimuman proses laser tersebut, terbitan kerja pemodelan RSM atas aplikasi proses pemotongan laser atas pemotong bahan adalah kurang. Kajian ini dijalankan pula bagi mengetahui laser memotong keluli tahan karat menjadi kaedah terbaik untuk pemotongan laser menggunakan proses RSM. Penginputan parameter yang dinilai adalah tekanan gas, bekalan kuasa dan kelajuan pemotongan, sambutan keluaran menjadi lebar alur gergaji, kekasaran permukaan. Proses pemotongan laser adalah salah satu teknik yang digunakan secara meluas untuk memotong bahan yang tebal untuk pelbagai aplikasi, seperti serat, keluli kayu fabrikasi. Dalam bidang laser pemotongan bahan, ia boleh diperbaiki secara drastik dengan aplikasi pemotongan keras. Aplikasi pemotongan pada keluli tahan karat untuk pelbagai teknik pemesinan, seperti serong selari dan serong memotong bukan selari, ini memerlukan ciri-ciri pemotongan yang berbeza justeru ini menjadi sangat bergantung kepada proses parameter di mana mereka telah dibentuk. Bagi mengoptimumkan dan menyesuaikan lebar alur gergaji dan permukaan ciri-ciri kekasaran dengan kecekapan, mesin proses pemotongan laser model menggunakan kaedah RSM telah dicadangkan.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATION

| | | |
|-------------------|---|---|
| ANNs | - | Artificial Neural Networks |
| ANOVA | - | Analysis Of Variance |
| CCD | - | Central Composite Design |
| CW | - | Continuous Wave |
| CO ₂ | - | Carbon dioxide |
| DC | - | Direct Current |
| I, V, Y | - | Types of bevel |
| K/W | - | kerf width |
| K = 1 | - | For an ideal Gaussian beam and |
| K < 1 | - | For real laser radiation. |
| LBC | - | Laser Beam Cutting |
| MRA | - | Multiple Regression Analysis Model |
| N ₂ | - | Nitrogen |
| Nd:YAG and Yt:YAG | - | Yttrium-Aluminum-Garnet (Crystal) Enriched with Neodymium |
| O ₂ | - | Oxygen |
| OP | - | Optical Microscopy |
| Psi | - | Pounds per square inch |
| RF | - | Radio frequency |
| RSM | - | Response Surface Methodology |
| SEM | - | Scanning Electrical Microscopy |
| XRD | - | X-Ray Diffraction |

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research background, problem statement, objectives and scope of the research.

1.1.1 Laser

Laser (Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation) is basically a cohesive, convergent and monochromatic electromagnetic radiation beam. Its wavelength ranges from ultra-violet to infrared. It can provide very low to very high power with a precise spot to any substrate type through any medium. Laser is differed from other electromagnetic radiation especially in terms of its cohesion, spectral purity and its straight line propagation. Therefore, it plays an important role in different industries, and used in many applications such as communication, military, medical and others. It is used in wide applications due to several properties such as spatial and temporal coherence, low divergence, high continuous or pulsed power density and mono - chromaticity (Majumdar & Manna, 2003). One of its main applications is its ability to act as a heat source known as Laser Materials Processing (LMP). This feature helps to utilize it in forming, joining, machining, manufacturing, coating, deposition and surface engineering. Due to the advantages of laser over the traditional cutting processes, it is

commonly used in machining various types of materials, especially very hard materials in many industrial applications. The fundamental advantages of laser cutting are: no vibration because it is a non- contact process and a low heat input that leads to less distortion and its ability to be controlled numerically.

The parameters of laser cutting process play a main role on the cutting edge quality features. The commercially available lasers for material processing are (Eltawahni et al., 2010):

- Solid state crystal or glass laser – Nd:YAG, Ruby
- Semiconductor laser – AlGaAs, GaAsSb and GaAlSb lasers
- Dye or liquid laser solutions of dyes in water/alcohol and other solvents
- Neutral or atomic gas lasers – He–Ne laser, Cu or Au vapor laser
- Ionized gas lasers or ion lasers – argon. ArC / and krypton .KrC / ion lasers
- Molecular gas lasers – CO₂ or CO laser
- Excimer laser – XeCl, KrF, etc
- Fiber laser- ytterbium

But, there are main obstacles that limit the laser extensive use in applications of routine material processing such as a beam size limitation, high cost of installation and replacement, additional and costly accessories, and need for skilled workers (Majumdar & Manna, 2003).

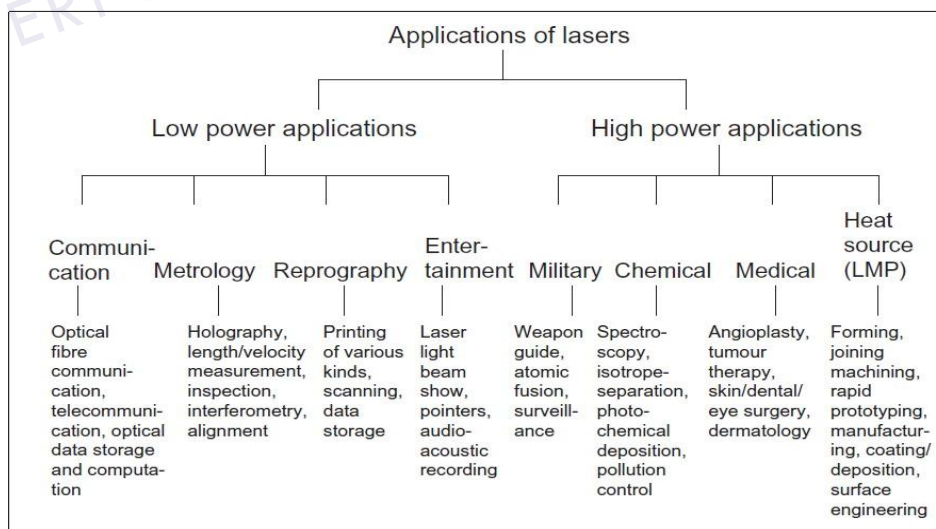


Figure1.1: Application spectrum of lasers (Majumdar & Manna 2003).

1.1.2 Laser Parameters

The laser cutting process quality and the response in terms of cut edge quality is controlled by a number of parameters linked to the laser system, used material, and the cutting process. The laser system parameters are summarized in figure 2 below.

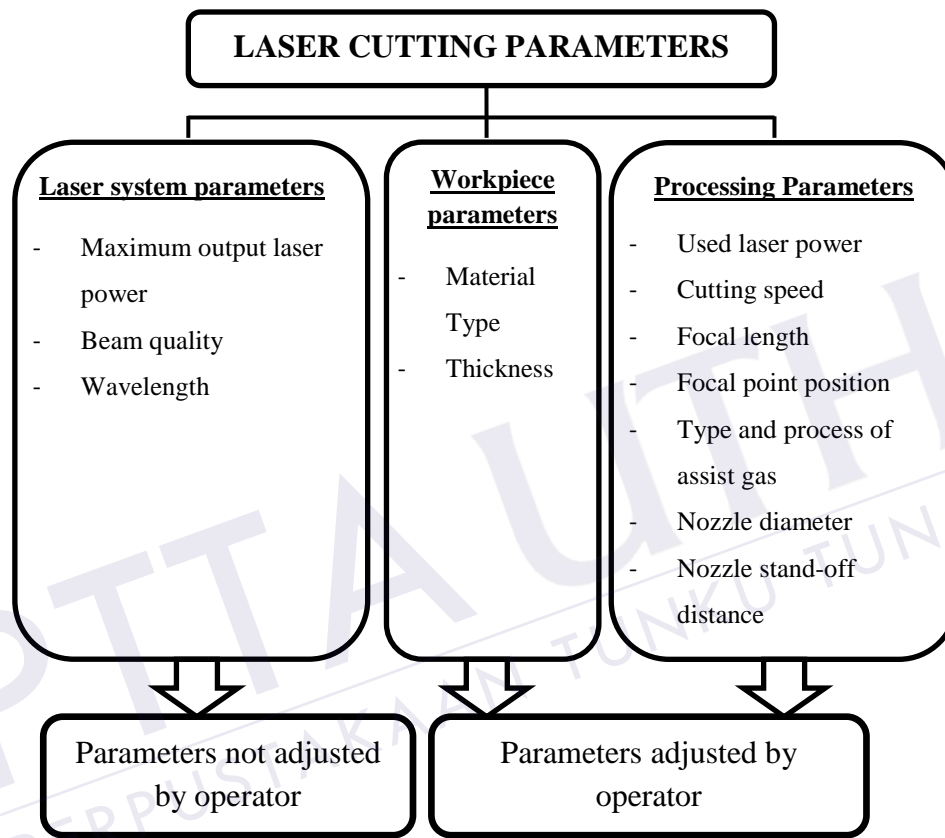


Figure1. 2: Laser Parameters (Wandera, 2010)

Researchers studied the impact of different laser parameters on cut edge quality, kerf dimensions, roughness and surface finish. Karet.al studied the process parameters impacts, such as laser power, spot size and dimensions, and cutting speed on the resulting kerf size. Yilbas (2008) studied the effect of laser power and oxygen gas pressure on the kerf width variation. Ghany and Newishy (2005) indicated a positive relationship between laser cutting quality and the laser power, pulse frequency, cutting speed and focus position.

1.1.3 Laser cut quality characteristics

The laser cut edge characteristics, which can be used to measure the laser cut quality include: the cut kerf width, dross attachment on the lower cut edge, cut edge squareness deviation (perpendicularity), cut edge surface roughness, and boundary layer separation point.

1.2 Problem Statement

The common metal machining is performed by using a laser machine with a vertical cutting head. The literature did not mention and explain the impact of the nonlinear inclined cutting process parameters on the surface quality, and it did not compare this effect with the linear cutting.

The nonlinear inclined cutting is very important in assembling parts or appliances or in welding pieces together as some of the parts and design must have inclined surfaces for ease of their linking and assembling. Therefore, an inclined cutting laser machine should be available, but this machine may not be available because it is expensive. For this reason, the available vertical cutting machine will be used to address this problem, where the incline degree of the work piece will be controlled (usually at an angle of 22°) under the vertical head to get the inclined cutting. After that the impact of inclined cutting process parameters will be examined on surface quality. This project is focused of an alternative process of the Acetylene oxygen cutting material in the CNC machine. It also focused on their defects on the metal surface, the changing characteristics at a mechanical level, the safety of the surface, the transactions thermal and many more. Therefore, the presence of the CNC laser machine using nitrogen gas best for the safety of the surface, the characteristics of the mechanical and others through the literature review of cutting mild steel, stainless steel and etc.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of this research is to conduct a comprehensive study on the processing parameters effect during an inclined laser cutting of thin sheet stainless steel. The effect of processing parameters is evaluated in terms of the surface's finish and flatness. The research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To investigate the laser material processing in inclined cutting.
2. To establish significant design parameters for a high quality of cut.
3. To model the optimal laser processing of a non-linear inclined cutting.

1.4 Research Scope

The aim of this research is to identify the parameters in the inclined laser cutting process that play a major role in producing very low roughness cuts and surface finish, which improve the end product quality. The laser nitrogen assistance will be used for the non-linear inclined cutting process of a thin sheet of stainless steel of 4 mm thickness.

The Response Surface Methodology (RSM) will be applied to construct a mathematical relationship between the laser cutting process parameters, power supply, cutting speed and gas pressure, and between the quality of the responses, namely the quality of cut edge and, and the surface roughness during an inclined cutting process. The potential impact of each laser cutting parameter on the responses will be defined by the verified mathematical models to identify the optimal cutting conditions that lead to the highest quality.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the laser and laser-cutting machine. The principles of the laser beam generation and the technology involved in the laser cutting machine is presented. The previous studies conducted on lasers and laser-cutting machines were reviewed and suggestions and recommendations from those studies were used in the current study.

2.1 Introduction

The conventional machining use has been restricted because of the sophisticated shape and unusual size of the work material, rigorous design need and the emergence of advanced engineering materials. Thus, the need for nonconventional machining methods becomes an urgent demand which lead to the emergence of Advanced Machining Processes (AMPs). (Choudhury & Shirley, 2010).

Laser machining is one of the AMPs utilized to cut various types of materials economically. Laser beam machining has a wide application because it gives a finer finish to the end product as compared to conventional cutting methods. (Choudhury & Shirley, 2010). Lasers are commonly used to cut or in machine for different types of materials, especially difficult-to-cut materials, in many industrial applications, due to its advantages over the conventional cutting processes. (Eltawahni et al., 2010). Compared with other conventional mechanical processes, laser cutting removes little material,

involves highly localized heat input to the workpiece, minimizes distortion, and offers no tool wear. Laser cutting is a thermal, non-contact, and highly automated process well suited for various manufacturing industries where a variety of components in large numbers are required to be machined with high dimensional accuracy and surface finish. (Madic et al., 2012).

2.2 History of laser

The first gas laser was developed in 1961 by A. Javan, W. Bennet, and D. Harriott of Bell Laboratories, using a mixture of helium and neon gases. At the same laboratories, L. F Johnson and K. Nassau demonstrated the first neodymium laser, which has since become one of the most reliable lasers available. This was followed in 1962 by the first semiconductor laser, demonstrated by R. Hall at the General Electric Research Laboratories. In 1963, C. K. N. Patel of Bell Laboratories discovered the infrared carbon dioxide laser, which is one of the most efficient and powerful lasers available today. Later that same year, E. Bell of Spectra Physics discovered the first ion laser, in mercury vapor. In 1964 W. Bridges of Hughes Research Laboratories discovered the argon ion laser, and in 1966 W. Silfvast, G.R. Fowles, and B. D. Hopkins produced the first blue helium-cadmium metal vapor laser. During that same year, P. P. Sorokin and J. R. Lankard of the IBM Research Laboratories developed the first liquid laser using an organic dye dissolved in a solvent, thereby leading to the development of broadly tunable lasers. Beside, W. Walter and co-workers at TRG reported the first copper vapor laser. In 1961, Fox and Li described the existence of resonant transverse modes in a laser cavity. That same year, Boyd and Gordon obtained solutions of the wave equation for confocal resonator modes. Unstable resonators were 9 demonstrated in 1969 by Krupke and Sooy and were described theoretically by Siegman. Q-switching was first obtained by McClung and Hellwarth in 1962 and described later by Wagner and Lengyel. The first mode-locking was obtained by Hargrove, Fork, and Pollack in 1964. Since then, many special cavity arrangements, feedback schemes, and other devices have been developed to improve the control, operation, and reliability of lasers.

2.3 Materials for laser cutting

Laser can cut plastics, woods, rubbers, foams, papers, and thin metals as long as they do not contain chlorine. Depending on the material, there is usually no limit to the thinnest sheet that can be cut, and the thickest sheet that can be cut is typically 1" {24 mm}. Also on the same list are some woods, various plastics including acrylic, ABS, Mylar, Delrin, PETG, and styrene, as shown in table1 below.

Table 2.1 Materials for Laser Cutting.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Plastics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABS (acrylonitrile butadiene styrene) • Acrylic (also known as Plexiglas, Lucite, PMMA) • Delrin (POM, acetal) – for a supplier, try McMaster-Carr. • High density polyethylene (HDPE) – melts badly • Kapton tape (Polyimide) • Mylar (polyester) • Nylon – melts badly • PETG (polyethylene terephthalate glycol) • Polyethylene (PE) – melts badly • Polypropylene (PP) – melts somewhat • Styrene • Two-tone acrylic – top color different than core material, usually for custom instrumentation panels, signs, and plaques. |
| Metals materials | Such as aluminum alloys, alloy steel, brass, carbon steel, stainless steel, titanium steel, and tool steel, Chrome, Coated metals, Cobalt, Copper, Gold, Platinum, Silver, Tin , Zinc |
| Foam | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depron foam – often used for RC planes. • EPM (Ethylene propylene rubber) • Gator foam – foam core gets burned and eaten away compared to the top and bottom hard shell. |
| Other | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cloths (leather, suede, felt, hemp, cotton) • Magnetic sheets • Papers (Such as paper, cardboard, and matte board) • Rubbers (only if they do not contain chlorine) • Teflon (PTFE, Polytetrafluoroethylene). • Woods (MDF, balsa, birch, poplar, red oak, cherry, holly, etc.) |

2.4 Laser Principal

The principles of current lasers are the same as the first one developed. A laser beam is generated in a glass tube with a mirror at each end. The laser gas is pumped into the glass and circulated by a turbine. One of the mirrors is 100 percent reflective, and the other is less than 100 percent reflective (usually seventy percent) as shown in Figure 2.1. The laser gas can be a mixture of helium, carbon dioxide and nitrogen. This mixture of laser gas is commonly known as a CO₂ laser. There are several other lasing gas mixtures available and in use, but only for high powered industrial lasers, the CO₂ mixture is the most common. An external energy source, such as the electrical power (most commonly DC power) or radio frequency (RF generator) excites the atoms in the laser gas or radio frequency (RF generator) that in turn, excites the atoms in the laser gas mixture. When the atoms of the laser gas become excited, the stimulated gas atoms give off a photon of light. This photon excites other atoms of the laser gas giving off more photons. This forms a chain reaction. There are many examples of artists and designers using the laser cutting technology to produce innovative concepts, especially with the use of soft bending - a process that slits cut into the profile to allow for bending by hand (Myers, et al., 2010).

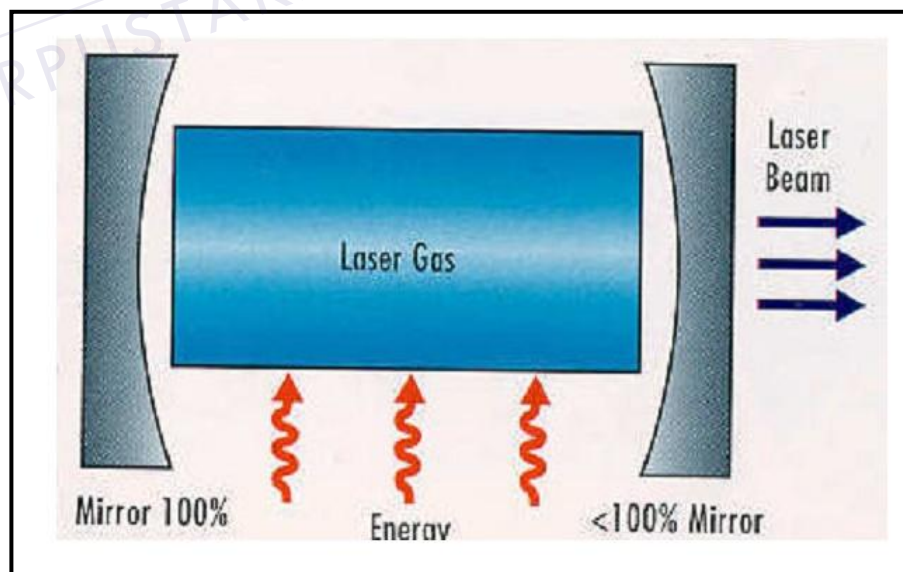


Figure 2.1 Illustration of Laser Working (Myers et al., 2010)

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